



State Personnel Monthly

BREAKING NEWS! Judge in ASEA/NATIONWIDE case approved the settlement agreement after a fairness hearing. Read the Order on our website www.personnel.alabama.gov.

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LOAN OPTIONS ARE COMING SOON!

The State Personnel Board is pleased to announce that participants in the Alabama 457 Deferred Compensation Plan administered by Great-West will be allowed to take a loan from their account. The "kick off" for this new enhancement will be **June 1, 2011**.

What does it mean to "take a loan?"

You are actually borrowing money from your account. You will pay the money back to your 457 account via payroll deduction, with interest, over a specified period of time.

Who is eligible?

Any active employee who is a participant in the Alabama Deferred Compensation Plan administered by Great-West is eligible to apply for a loan if the participant has an account balance of \$2,000 or more at the time of application.

How much may I borrow?

A participant may borrow the lesser of:

1. One-half of the account value.
2. \$50,000.

What is the interest rate on my loan?

The interest rate is calculated at the prime rate plus 2%. The prime rate that is used to determine the interest rate is published in the Wall Street Journal on the first business day of the month. (Prime rate was 3.25% as of May 2, 2011).

Where do my interest payments go?

All interest payments will be paid directly to your account and invested in your current investment allocation at the time of repayment.

What are the fees for the loan?

There is a one-time \$50 loan origination fee that is charged

for each new loan and a maintenance fee of \$6.25 per quarter.

How do I apply for a loan?

To apply for a loan, you may either access the website at www.AlabamaRetire.com or call KeyTalk®, toll free at (877) 313-2262. Note: You must have your username or Social Security number and personal identification number (PIN) in order to access the Web site or KeyTalk. If you do not know your PIN, you can request it in one of two ways as shown below. You will receive the new PIN within 4-5 business days.

1. Access the website at www.AlabamaRetire.com.
2. Call a Customer Service Representative at (877) 313-2262 and press "1".

For more information, contact Great-West at (877) 313-2262. **LOAN QUOTE INFORMATION WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL JUNE 1, 2011.**

Points of Interest:

- State Personnel Training Schedule
- The State Personnel Board will meet May 18, 2011

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CollegeCounts 529 Fund Greatly Enhanced

The State of Alabama recently revamped and re-launched the CollegeCounts 529 college savings plan. The new structure has a redesigned website, new investment options and lower fees. As college costs continue to escalate, saving for col-

lege is more important now than ever before. Take a look at some of the CollegeCounts features:

Tax Benefits

The State of Alabama provides a state income tax deduction of up to \$10,000 for married couples

filing jointly and \$5,000 for single filers for contributions to the Plan! Plus, funds build with no taxes while in the plan. When used for qualified college costs, the funds come out federal and Alabama state income tax-free. These attractive tax benefits pro-

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Personnel Training Schedule – May and June 2011

The seminars listed below are being offered in May and June. All training offered by State Personnel is free to the employee and the agency. For more information visit our website at www.personnel.alabama.gov. To register for a class, please see your agency's training coordinator. We look forward to seeing you in class!

May 10: Performance Appraisal for Supervisors in Montgomery

May 11: Progressive Discipline in Montgomery

May 12: Sexual Harassment Prevention in Montgomery

May 17: Family and Medical Leave Act in Montgomery

May 19: Interview and Selection in Montgomery

May 24-25: Dynamics of Supervision in Montgomery

May 26: Time Management in Montgomery

June 13*: Employment Law for Supervisors in Guntersville

June 14*: Sexual Harassment Prevention in Guntersville

June 16: Sexual Harassment Prevention in Mobile

June 28: Sexual Harassment Prevention in Dothan

*Due to storm damage at Lake Guntersville State Park, the June 13-14 programs may be rescheduled. If you are registered for these programs, please keep in touch with your training coordinator regarding these dates or check our [website](#) for updates.



Log onto www.perkscard.com for everyday discounts available to State employees! If you have not registered your card, click [here](#) to join and have a chance to win a \$25 gift card to Restaurant.com.

Don't forget: State employees can save 15% on qualifying cellular phone services and products!

For qualifying AT&T Services: To find the AT&T store closest to you, visit www.att.com/find-a-store. Please have proof of eligibility (employee badge or pay stub).

For qualifying Verizon Wireless services: Go to <http://www.verizonwireless.com/b2c/employee/emaildomainauthentication.jsp> and enter your email address to validate your eligibility.

2011 State Employee Recognition Events:

May 5: Huntsville Stars

May 5: Mobile Bay Bears

May 12: Birmingham Barons

May 12: Montgomery Biscuits

The Alabama Retired State Employees Association (ARSEA) is offering discounted movie tickets to active State employees. For discounted tickets, please call ARSEA at (334) 834-9116 or (800) 844-7732, or go to www.ARSEA.org.



Follow us on Facebook for updates on testing, job announcements, the Nationwide Settlement Agreement and more!

Search for "State of Alabama Personnel Department"



A Word from Great-West Retirement Services®

“We’re here for you (or we can be there for you) PLUS some New Year’s reminders that are a bit late...”

To say 2011 has been an interesting year so far would be quite the understatement. Seemingly every day we learn about some new policy or change that will impact most of our lives. There’s so much going on that it’s hard to keep it all straight. We want you to know that when it comes to the Alabama Deferred Compensation Plan, we are here for you and we have answers. Got a question about retirement? Call us. How about the tax consequences of a transaction you’re considering? Call us. What about DROP or sick and annual leave contributions? Call us.

There are three ways to reach us: First, call customer service at (877) 313-2262, option 1¹; Second, reach your dedicated field representative at (877) 313-2262, option 2; Third, call the Montgomery office direct at (334) 240-0057. We are available for one-on-one appointments as well as group meetings². And if you can’t come to us, we’ll be glad to come to you.

Here are a few reminders for 2011 I hope you will find helpful:

- There’s no time like the present. If you are not participating, consider joining. You can contribute as little as \$10 per paycheck.
- Open the envelope. Take a look at your account statement and see where you stand. You might be pleasantly surprised.
- Review your investments. We have several different options for you to choose from. You can speak with us or use our online tools if you would like some help.
- Update your beneficiary. We’ve been saying this since the beginning and most of you have taken the time to do so, but if you have not, please update your beneficiary information. You can update either online or on paper.
- Stay tuned. The State of Alabama and Great-West will continue to make improvements to the plan for the benefit of all participants.

Your Deferred Compensation Plan is a significant piece of your retirement puzzle. Let us help you with it.

Sincerely,

Donald Erwin
Regional Director

¹ Access to voice response system may be limited or unavailable during periods of peak demand, market volatility, systems upgrades/maintenance or other reasons.

² Representatives of GWFS Equities, Inc. are not registered investment advisers, and cannot offer financial, legal or tax advice. Please consult with your financial planner, attorney and/or tax adviser as needed.

Securities, when offered, are offered through GWFS Equities, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Company.

Great-West Retirement Services® refers to products and services provided by Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Company and its subsidiaries and affiliates. Great-West Retirement Services® is a registered trademark of Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Company.

CollegeCounts 529 Fund Greatly Enhanced, Continued

vide an additional potential boost as you work to save and accumulate funds for college expenses.

Qualified College Costs

Funds can be used to pay qualified higher education expenses including tuition, fees, books, equipment and supplies. The Plan can be used at colleges, universities, community colleges and trade and technical schools within Alabama, across the country and even some foreign schools, providing excellent flexibility.

Investments

The enhanced CollegeCounts 529 Fund portfolios invest in well-known mutual funds, including Vanguard, T. Rowe Price, Fidelity and PIMCO. The investment

structure has been designed to provide investors with investment diversity, choice and quality fund families.

Getting Started

It's easy to get started. **The Plan makes it easy, with no required opening or ongoing contribution requirements.** You can contribute online or invest by check at your convenience. Many investors like the ease of an automatic investment plan, investing \$25, \$50 or more each month.

For more information:

Visit www.CollegeCounts529.com or call (866) 529-2228, 7:30 a.m.—6:00 p.m., Monday—Friday. Get Started Today!

¹ A deduction, not to exceed \$5,000 per taxpayer, is

allowed as an adjustment to income on the Alabama income tax return for contributions made to the CollegeCounts 529 Fund. The deduction may equal an amount up to \$10,000 for married taxpayers filing a joint return where both taxpayers are making such contributions into the CollegeCounts 529 Fund.

The CollegeCounts 529 Fund is a qualified tuition program under Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code that is sponsored by the State of Alabama and administered by the Board of Trustees of the ACES Trust Fund (the "Trust" and Plan issuer). Union Bank & Trust Company serves as Program Manager. Accounts and investments under the CollegeCounts 529 Fund are not insured or guaranteed by the FDIC, the State of Alabama, the State Treasurer of Alabama, the Board, the Trust, the Program, Union Bank & Trust, or any other entity.

Before investing, you should consider the investment objectives, risks, fees, expenses, and tax consequences associated with the Program. All of this information is contained in the Program Disclosure Statement available at www.CollegeCounts529.com or by calling (866) 529-2228. Please read it carefully before investing.

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We're on the Web!

www.personnel.alabama.gov

The Alabama Merit System law created the Personnel Department to be administered by a Personnel Director who answers to an independent board. The Board currently consists of five members who serve staggered six-year terms. Two members are appointed by the Governor, one by the Lieutenant Governor, one by the Speaker of the House, and one member is an elected classified State employee who is subject to all merit system rules and regulations.

By law the Board is required to meet once each month. Its principal functions are to:

- *adopt and amend rules and regulations;
- *adopt and modify classification and pay plans;
- *hear the appeals of employees who have been dismissed;
- *represent public interest in the improvement of personnel administration in state service; and
- *advise and assist the Personnel Director.

The Personnel Department is divided into 9 major areas: Classification and Pay; Examination, Recruitment and Certification; Personnel and Payroll Audit; Information Systems; Training; Legal; Administrative Law Judge; Transportation Work Group; and Administration. Please remember, the Personnel Department is here to protect the merit system and to serve as a resource for State employees and the citizens of Alabama!

The State Personnel Board is scheduled to meet on May 18, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in the Board Room on the 3rd Floor of the Folsom Administrative Building in Montgomery. The meeting is open to the public.